



March 22nd, 2013

Dear Chairman Beyer, Committee

Thank you for considering the following testimony in relation to **SB 562, Community Net Metering**.

This bill is essentially about allowing all Oregonians to have the ability to generate some of the electricity they use. A recent National Renewable Energy Laboratory study showed that only around 25% of Oregonians have access to net metering¹. The other 75% don't have options for generating their own power, either because they rent, they are low income, their roofs are shaded or a number of other reasons. This bill will allow members of a community to participate in solar or other renewable energy system in their neighborhood at a level that fits for them, and share the output, with their portion of the generation subtracted from their consumption right on their power bill.

The form of this bill closely follows guidelines by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council's (IREC) for model program rules community renewables². IREC's focus on fair practices that enable access to renewable energy that don't impact other ratepayers over the last 30 years had made them a highly respected voice in responsible renewable energy policy. We commend the committee for building an Oregon specific policy on this well considered base.

Net metering is the rock on which Oregon's solar industry is built. In a state that has tried every solar incentive and program out there, net metering has been a constant through it all. In order to gain the next level of maturity we need to expand that stable base to the other 75% of Oregonians, and follow best practices for enabling community solar projects. This means jobs, it means more money staying in the Oregon economy, it means greater self sufficiency and resiliency in our electrical system.

This is not a wild idea at least eight other states have community net metering rules in place. Community net metering would be limited by the same one half of one percent limit on net metering in Oregon. The need for community organizing and individual participation mean that community net metering will grow slowly allowing utilities to adapt and share the benefits of

¹ Denholm, P. and R. Margolis. 2008. Supply Curves for Rooftop Solar PV-Generated Electricity for the United States. NREL/TP-6A0-44073. URL: www.nrel.gov/docs/fy09osti/44073.pdf . Accessed December 29, 2012.

² [IREC] Interstate Renewable Energy Council. Community Renewables Model Program Rules. URL: http://irecusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/IREC-Community-Renewables-Report-11-16-10_FINAL.pdf . Accessed December 29, 2012



increased distributed generation. The bill has protections to ensure that community net metering covers its cost to the utility so that other rate payers are not impacted.

In short this bill is something positive the legislature can do for Oregon's economy that does not cost the state, or other ratepayers, anything. In addition we get the environmental, self-sufficiency, and other renewable energy benefits from distributed solar energy. All of this for the price of asking our utilities to allow all of their customers the opportunity to reduce their electrical consumption by producing some of their own energy in cooperation with their neighbors.

Solar Oregon would be happy to sit down with legislators, utilities, and other stakeholders to help implement a community solar program that is cost neutral to the utilities and provides solar access to all who want to do their part in transitioning Oregon to its own, home grown, energy sources. Community net metering puts power in the hands of Oregonians to improve the local economy and the global environment.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Carlson".

Claire Carlson
Executive Director, Solar Oregon.